

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Eliza Symonds Bell, April 30, 1878, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Mrs. Alexander Melville Bell. 57 West Cromwell Road, April 30, 1878. My Dear Mrs. Bell:

Alec and Mamma have kept you so fully informed of all that is going on here that I have not felt so very guilty in not writing to you myself. Alec received your letter the other day and we were so glad that the weather continued so pleasant and that you were all well. Mamma and Sister arrived Sunday night. Mamma seems very well and bright but my sister caught cold and has been suffering ever since. We thought her much better yesterday but today she has a good deal of pain and seems very frail. Tomorrow my nurse comes, she will help take care of her, for she is so thin that she cannot even bear Mamma's rubbing her. She gets up after breakfast and spends the day on the sofa in the drawing room, coming down to meals, but more because she so hates playing the invalid than because she has the strength for it. Alec carries her up when he is at home, but the past few days he has seldom been in the house. Usually he is off somewhere in the still unoccupied building sites behind our house, or down by the river at Hammersmith Kew or Twickenham busy making experiments with Mr. Warner. He is at Twickenham this afternoon, a telegram has just informed us and "will try to be home to dinner at seven but am not certain about the trains" I think something else, utter forgetfulness of time and hunger will as usual keep him until darkness makes all work impossible. He is happy in his experiments but worried and irritated by the impossibility of having instruments made quickly and properly, and by the stupidity of his secretary she cannot write the simplest note without Alec's help, and thus causes him to lose almost as much time as if he wrote himself. Alec talks constantly of dismissing him as his cost is more than he is worth, but I doubt he will do more than talk of it. We all dread the return of the days of steadily increasing piles of unanswered letters.

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You ask if it is not a great expense to have three servants. Yes 2 certainly, but I do not see how we can help it. Alec paid the remainder of Miss Home's debt to Mr. Fluken and we might as well get the worth of the money in her services, which are great in managing the house for me, but she was not strong enough to do the hard work of cooking nor was Emma equal to the whole work of the house so there was nothing for it but to get another servant. By and by (about May 1,78) she will be even more necessary than now. We continue to rejoice in Beasie, she has not been here six weeks and we have found the "new broom to work well" She is so quick and smart and equal to any emergency. Once we had to extemporize a dinner party, in half an hour our family dinner was changed into quite a state one with an immense piece of cold corned beef crowning the foot of the table while a pineapple garnished the middle and small plates of oranges, grapes and nuts stood around, Alec had merely told Beasie to go and get something to eat. She is just as pleasant and thoughtful as possible.

Do you know I feel so sorry you and Mr. Bell are so anxious for a little grander. Of course I cannot tell, and before this reaches you, you will know whether a little son or daughter has come to us, still somehow I have a very strong feeling it will be a girl. It will be so for the little one to come ?hen it isn't wanted. We expect it about the 8th. of May but we are all ready for it now. Mamma brought several lovely things from my friends at home, tiny little sacquem, pretty socks soft and delicate enough even for the wee feet, large warm blankets, all the work of loving fingers. Then I have a beautiful set of silver knife, fork and spoon and a handsome embroidered flannel blanket. Since she came here Mamma has bought as my Sister's present a lovely pink lined basinette under white muslin, I have also a dainty basket to match and you may imagine feel very rich.

I am surprised that neither Alec nor I should have mentioned Mr. Adam Scott before. He has been closely connected with the Telephone since our arrival here, and is now temporary Secretary of the Co. At one time he was Alec's 3 secretary for a few days consequently we have seen a good deal of him. We dined once with his sisters.

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Alec is considerably worried about the formation of the Company now. He went in today to consult Mr. Morgan the successor of Peabody and an old friend of my grandfathers about affaire, and as to the choice of a solicitor. I hope Mr. Morgan will be able to reassure Alec.

It is almost time for the mails to close and I must send this.

With love to Mr. Bell and Alec's cousins,

Affectionately yours, Mabel.